

## SPORTS

## Has integration hurt Black athletics?

Black athletes  
first victimBy LONZA HARDY  
Sports Editor

The Black athlete often looks around and finds himself in a rather precarious situation. Everyone seems to want him.

At the top of the grab-pile is integration's worse threat to Black athletics—the white coach. Topped with the elimination of Black coaches and Black schools, the state of Black athletics is indeed in question.

Alfred Harvey, who is a three-team coach at a small Black high school called Gumberry High, says the Black athlete has become a real commodity. This, he says, yields serious implications.

"Being a commodity, he's something that you use, and a lot of people do use the Black athlete," Harvey explained. "If he doesn't be careful, he can be used in such a way that it becomes very detrimental."

Harvey said that many white coaches get the Black players only to use them to their own advantage. There is no real concern or respect for the athlete as a person, Harvey stated.

"A lot of coaches play athletes when they're injured, break the rules and do a lot of things they shouldn't do that are no wholesome to athletics. Most Black coaches, like here at Gumberry, don't do that type of thing because we place our premium on individual safety."

Harvey went on to say that many Black athletes drop out of college before they get their degrees because their white coaches merely want to win—win at all costs. He said that some of them never care about the athletes as individuals.

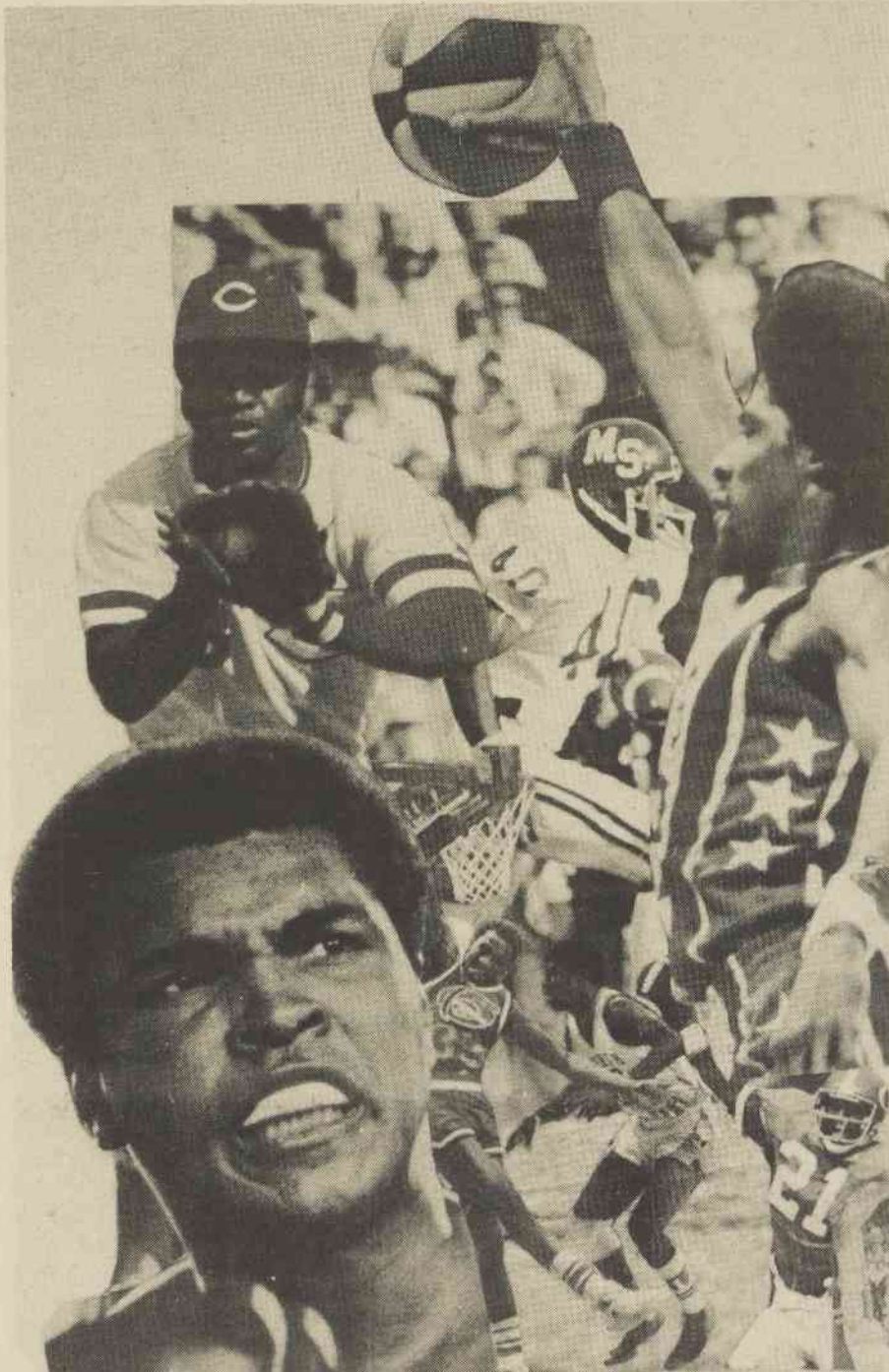
"You hear some of them come with the rhetoric, 'I care about this young man as an individual,' but he only cares about the superstar. If you're not a superstar, then you're lost."

"The superstar is taken care of, but what about the average ballplayer? He's pushed aside and shoved out the back door."

## Black coaches

Harvey stated that after the Black athlete, the second victim that is struck by integration is the Black coach. The Black coach has indeed been termed "a vanishing species."

"In fact, we don't have too many Black



Coach Harvey: Superstar is taken care of, but what about the average ballplayer?

coaches anymore," cited Harvey. "All the Blacks now are assistants or in number two positions, and you know what sociology says about being number two—you develop a stigma about that."

Is there a difference in the quality of the predominately Black teams that have white coaches as opposed to the former Black coaches? Harvey felt so.

"I won't say whether the quality of the teams have improved or decreased, but it

has remained stagnant and that's not good. Anything that remains stagnant does not lend to progress."

According to Harvey, one would see far superior performances exhibited by Black athletes if there was a Black head coach, someone who could identify with the problems and needs of Black athletes on a team. Because this is deficient, many of them (players) go astray.

It should be noted that when Harvey

came to Gumberry High two years ago, he said he inherited a weak basketball team that was totally disorganized, lacked unity and lacked teammate friendship—under white coaches. The next year he had transformed that team into a winner and it ended the season in second place in the Albermarle Conference.

"Black people don't like to lead, they like to be lead," Harvey commented. "We have white people that lead our athletes in those situations and then forget about them if they don't blossom and bloom into superstars."

## Black schools

Athletically speaking, the Black school has also been severely damaged as a result of integration. The most notable difference between the predominately Black and the predominately white school is equipment.

"When the white athlete invaded all Black situations, a lot of new equipment started coming in, whereas before hardly any equipment would be given to those schools," Harvey cited. "Wherever the white athlete goes, you can expect equipment changes."

Harvey said one reason for the lack of proper sports facilities at Black schools is the lack of funds. Most Black schools, he said, seldomly receive money and have to go out and solicit funds from the community.

But as he stated, "It makes us better coaches because we have to be more innovative than he (the white coach) does."

## What's ahead?

As the schools and colleges around the nation become more integrated, Harvey assures that Black athlete that he'll be given anything he wants (at the expense of Black schools) and made into a superstar at an early age. But he warns the athlete that he can be spoiled and if he's let down, may be mad and alienate himself from everybody—whites and Blacks.

"Black athletes have always been the type of people that once they make it they forget about their roots," Harvey concluded. "Whenever you're pampered and led to think you're better than anyone else, you're gonna fall into a pitfall."

Next issue: a survey of other coaches' sentiments.

## Something must be done

Editor's note: The following editorial appeared originally in a recent issue of the A and T Register:

Some North Carolina State Senators are still insisting that the taxpayers of this state prepare to build a 28,000 to 30,000 basketball arena. The arena will be the home for a lot of ACC basketball games.

Now I wonder what on earth gave them, those senators supporting the bill, the idea that all the people in North Carolina are ACC fans. The facility, if built, would be located in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area. The majority of the taxpaying public doesn't live in that area. They would be paying for something that they probably would never get a chance to see or use.

These senators would rather waste millions of dollars on a facility that isn't needed than to aid the state's educational

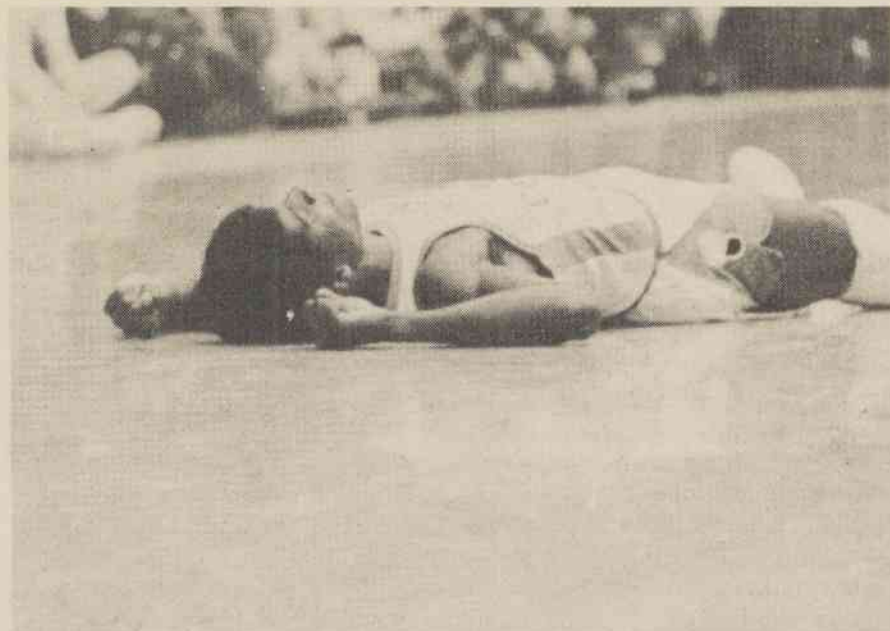
system—and it needs all the help it can get.

And A&T—it is struggling to build a 7,000 seat arena which it has been trying to build for years.

What annoys this writer is the fact that the state lawmakers are always complaining about not having enough money to fund programs at its colleges and universities. Yet, for something of personal interest, there is no limit.

Any senator who would be willing to waste the taxpayers' money on such a foolhearted adventure should not be in office.

Something must be done now to stop this state from going ACC-crazy. If something isn't done soon, Black schools in this state won't have a chance to survive in the sports world.



Phil Ford: Takin' a little nap.

Staff photo by James Parker